

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 CAIRO 17589 01 OF 04 241537Z
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1807
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 04 CAIRO 17589

EXDIS (DISTRIBUTE AS NODIS)

AMMAN FOR ATHERTON

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR PEPR PGOV EG IS US
SUBJECT: SADAT ON ME PEACE NEGOTIATIONS

REF: SECTO 8085

SUMMARY: GAVE SADAT SECRETARY'S ORAL MESSAGE. HE DID NOT PICK UP ANY POINTS MENTIONED THEREIN, BUT ASKED THAT I THANK THE SECRETARY AND ALSO PRESIDENT CARTER FOR LATTER'S GENEROUS WORDS ABOUT HIM. HE CASTIGATED BEGIN FDR OBSTINACY, CHARGING THAT BEGIN'S APPETITE GROWS WITH EVERY TALK SADAT HAS WITH WEIZMAN. HE KNEW OF ISRAELI CABINET CRITICISM OF WEIZMAN. WEIZMAN HAD SENT ORAL MESSAGE TWO DAYS AGO TO GAMASY INDICATING EGYPTIAN PRESS ATTACKS ON BEGIN ARE CAUSING MINISTERS TO BACK THE PRIMIN. WEIZMAN HAD SUGGESTED THAT PERHAPS GAMASY MIGHT VISIT JERUSALEM TO EASE THE SITUATION AND HAD URGED A MEETING BETWEEN SADAT AND BEGIN. SADAT UNWILLING MEET WITH BEGIN. TOLD SADAT THAT WE SHARE ESTIMATE THAT EGYPTIAN ATTACKS ON BEGIN ARE RALLYING CABINET SUPPORT FOR PRIMIN. SADAT NOTED THAT ISRAELI STATEMENT, AFTER YESTERDAY'S CABINET
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 CAIRO 17589 01 OF 04 241537Z

MEETING, MADE IT CLEAR THAT BEGIN PROPOSING "BARTER" DEAL. THIS NOT ACCEPTABLE TO EGYPT UNLESS ISRAELIS ALSO BEAR IN MIND NORMALIZATION CONCESSIONS SADAT HAS ALREADY MADE. LATE LAST NIGHT BEGIN MESSAGE RE RESULTS OF CABINET MEETING HAD BEEN SENT TO SADAT THROUGH ISRAELI MILITARY TEAM IN GIANACLIS. ON SADAT'S INSTRUCTIONS, EGYPTIANS HAD REFUSED ACCEPT IT. IF BEGIN SEEKS TO SEND IT

THROUGH U.S. EMBASSY, GOE WILL ALSO REFUSE ACCEPT IT. REASON IS THAT BEGIN HAD ALREADY MADE ANSWERS PUBLIC TWO DAYS AGO. IN CIRCUMSTANCES, THERE NO POINT TO ANY FURTHER MEETING UNTIL ISRAELIS INTRODUCE A "NEW ELEMENT." DAYAN HAD MADE IT CLEAR AT LEEDS THAT ISRAEL INSISTS UPON LAND FOR SECURITY. THIS IS UNACCEPTABLE. SADAT PLANS DISCUSS MATTER AT UPCOMING NSC MEETING, AFTER WHICH LETTER WILL BE SENT TO PRESIDENT CARTER SETTING FORTH EGYPTIAN POSITION. SADAT WILL ALSO DO SO IN JULY 27 SPEECH TO THE NATION. WESTERN EUROPEAN LEADERS AND JEWISH COMMUNITY LEADERS IN WESTERN EUROPE WILL ALSO BE INFORMED. EMPHASIZING NEED FOR ONGOING NEGOTIATIONS, I URGED THAT SADAT RECONSIDER HIS DECISION NOT TO AGREE TO ANOTHER MEETING. STRESSED THAT WE CONSIDER ANOTHER SUCH MEETING, PREFERABLY WITH BOTH FOREIGN AND DEFENSE MINISTERS PRESENT, AS A NECESSARY STEP IN THE PROCESS. SADAT MADE NO COMMITMENT, BUT FINALLY AGREED MATTER CAN BE DISCUSSED FURTHER WHEN AHERTON AND LATER THE SECRETARY VISIT THE AREA. END SUMMARY.

1. HAD HOUR AND A HALF MEETING WITH SADAT TODAY AT HIS REQUEST. HE LEFT FOR ALEXANDRIA IMMEDIATELY AFTER MEETING. HIS MAIN PURPOSE IN SUMMONING ME WAS TO DISCUSS STATUS ME PEACE NEGOTIATIONS. HIS COMMENTS, AS TAKEN FROM MY NOTES, FOLLOW.

2. I FIRST GAVE TO SADAT THE SECRETARY'S ORAL MESSAGE
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 CAIRO 17589 01 OF 04 241537Z

AND READ IT TO HIM. HE LISTENED ATTENTIVELY, BUT DID NOT PICK UP ANY OF THE POINTS MENTIONED THEREIN. HE DID ASK THAT I THANK THE SECRETARY AND ALSO THAT I CONVEY HIS THANKS TO PRESIDENT CARTER FOR THE LATTER'S GENEROUS WORDS ABOUT HIM. HE APPRECIATED PRESIDENT CARTER'S COMMENTS GREATLY AND WISHED ME TO REAFFIRM TO THE PRESIDENT THAT HE "WILL NEVER LET HIM DOWN."

3. SADAT THEN TURNED TO THE ISRAELI SITUATION. HE NOTED THAT, AFTER HIS MEETINGS WITH PERES, EUROPEAN JEWISH LEADERS AND WEIZMAN, THERE IS A "SPLIT" IN ISRAEL. BEGIN APPEARS TO BE MORE "OBSTINATE AND TOUGH" THAN EVER. BEGIN'S APPETITE, SADAT SAID, SEEMS TO GROW WITH EVERY TALK THAT THE PRESIDENT HAS WITH WEIZMAN, E.G. NILE WATER FOR THE NEGEV AND OTHER UNSPECIFIED MATTERS. HE HAD HEARD THROUGH GOLDA MEIR, VIA GOLDMANN CHANNEL, THAT BEGIN IS IN BAD HEALTH BECAUSE OF MUTUALLY INTERACTING MEDICINES HE MUST TAKE FOR DIABETES AND HIS HEART AILMENT. NASSER HAD SUCH A SITUATION AND SADAT RECALLED THAT HIS PREDECESSOR HAD SURVIVED NO MORE THAN A YEAR.

4. BEGIN, SADAT CONTENTED, IS TRYING TO BRING DOWN EVERYTHING THAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED. HE KNEW THAT WEIZMAN IS A PERSONAL FRIEND OF BEGIN AND REAFFIRMED THAT DURING HIS LAST TALKS WITH WEIZMAN, THE LATTER HAD BEEN TOTALLY LOYAL TO BEGIN. WEIZMAN HAS BEEN DOING HIS BEST TO BRING SOME FLEXIBILITY INTO BEGIN'S THINKING. YET, BECAUSE OF HIS LAST MEETING WITH WEIZMAN, THE ISRAELI CABINET--WITH BEGIN'S APPROVAL--HAD TORN WEIZMAN TO

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PAGE 01 CAIRO 17589 02 OF 04 241546Z
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S E C R E T SECTION 02 OF 04 CAIRO 17589
EXDIS DISTRIBUTE AS NODIS
PIECES.

5. TWO DAYS AGO WEIZMAN HAD SENT ANOTHER MESSAGE TO GAMASY. THE MESSAGE HAD BEEN ORAL AND WAS RECEIVED THROUGH THE ISRAELI MILITARY MISSION AT GIANACLIS. WEIZMAN'S MESSAGE INDICATED THAT BEGIN IS IN AN "OBSTINATE STAGE." WEIZMAN NOTED BEGIN'S INSISTENCE THAT ANY SADAT DIALOGUE SHOULD BE WITH BEGIN, NOT WITH SUBORDINATES. THE ATTACKS OF THE EGYPTIAN PRESS, WEIZMAN CAUTIONED, ARE CAUSING MOST MINISTERS TO BACK BEGIN. (HERE SADAT INTERJECTED THAT HE DID NOT BELIEVE THE EGYPTIAN PRESS OR HE HAVE DELIBERATELY INSULTED BEGIN. HE HAD GIVEN STRICT ORDERS THAT ONLY OBJECTIVE ATTACKS MIGHT BE MADE ON BEGIN.) WEIZMAN ASKED HOW WAY MIGHT BE FOUND TO ARRANGE ANOTHER MEETING BETWEEN SADAT AND BEGIN AND URGED SADAT TO AGREE TO SUCH A MEETING.

6. WEIZMAN THEN SUGGESTED THAT PERHAPS GAMASY MIGHT VISIT JERUSALEM AS A FIRST STEP. THIS COULD EASE THE SITUATION.

7. EVEN BEFORE THAT, SADAT RECALLED, AFTER HE HAD

RECALLED KAMEL FROM THE JERUSALEM TALKS, WEIZMAN HAD TOLD HIM THAT BEGIN DOES NOT CARE FOR FONMIN KAMEL. IF GAMASY WERE TO VISIT JERUSALEM, WEIZMAN HAD SUGGESTED, SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 CAIRO 17589 02 OF 04 241546Z

THIS WOULD HELP. HE, SADAT, HAD NOT AGREED AT THAT TIME AND WAS NOT READY TO DO SO NOW. "I HAVE CONFIDENCE IN MY FONMIN," SADAT SAID, "AND AM NOT READY TO SOOTHE BEGIN'S WHIMS."

8. I TOLD SADAT THAT THE AMERICAN DELEGATION HAD DISCUSSED THIS MATTER DURING LEEDS CONFERENCE. AMBASSADOR LEWIS, WHOM HE HAD MET IN JERUSALEM AND WHO IS AN ACUTE OBSERVER OF THE ISRAELI POLITICAL SCENE, SHARES THE VIEW THAT THE ATTACKS BY SADAT AND THE EGYPTIAN PRESS ON BEGIN ARE STRENGTHENING RATHER THAN WEAKENING THE LATTER. WE ALL AGREE THAT WEIZMAN WOULD LIKE TO HELP, BUT WEIZMAN'S POSITION HAS BEEN SERIOUSLY WEAKENED AFTER HIS LAST MEETINGS WITH SADAT. PARTLY IN AN EFFORT TO KEEP WEIZMAN IN THE PEACE PROCESS, WE HAVE SUGGESTED THE DESIRABILITY OF ANOTHER MEETING TO INCLUDE BOTH FOREIGN AND DEFENSE MINISTERS. I RECALLED THAT THIS IDEA WAS INCLUDED IN THE SECRETARY'S ORAL MESSAGE AND HOPED IT WOULD COMMEND ITSELF TO SADAT.

9. SADAT LISTENED, BUT MADE NO SUBSTANTIVE COMMENT. HE RECALLED THAT BEGIN, AFTER YESTERDAY'S CABINET MEETING, HAD PUBLICLY INDICATED THAT A MESSAGE WILL BE SENT TO SADAT AND HAD ALSO ANNOUNCED THE CONTENTS OF THE MESSAGE. AS SADAT SAW IT, BEGIN IS IN EFFECT PROPOSING A "BARTER" DEAL. HE WAS SURE THAT DAYAN HAD PUT BEGIN UP TO THIS. ALTHOUGH WEIZMAN HAD INDICATED THAT HE WAS FAVORABLY DISPOSED TOWARD THE IDEA OF GIVING EGYPT ENCLAVES AT AL ARISH AND MOUNT SINAI, BEGIN HAD REJECTED THIS, STRESSING THAT IT IS THE POLICY OF THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT NOT TO GIVE ANYTHING WITHOUT GETTING SOMETHING IN RETURN. IT WAS THIS SAME BEGIN ATTITUDE, SADAT ASSERTED, THAT CAUSED HIM TO RECALL KAMEL FROM THE JERUSALEM TALKS. HE SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 CAIRO 17589 02 OF 04 241546Z

COULD NEVER AGREE TO HAVING ANY ASSOCIATION WITH ISRAEL ON THIS BASIS. IF THE NAME OF THE GAME IS TO BE "BARTER", THEN BOTH SIDES SHOULD GO BACK TO THE 67 BORDERS SO THAT EACH WILL BE ON THE SAME LEVEL AND THEREAFTER BARTERING CAN TAKE PLACE. BUT USING THE ISRAELI OCCUPATION OF ARAB LANDS AS A MEANS OF "BARTER"

IS TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE. MOREOVER, IF IT IS "BARTER" THAT THE ISRAELIS ARE TALKING ABOUT, BEGIN SHOULD BEAR IN MIND (A) SADAT'S RECOGNITION OF ISRAEL THROUGH HIS VISIT TO JERUSALEM, (B) SADAT'S RECOGNITION OF ISRAELI SECURITY REQUIREMENTS, (C) SADAT'S READINESS TO HAVE OPEN BORDERS, (D) SADAT'S READINESS TO HAVE DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS AND TRADE. ALL OF THESE ARE ELEMENTS GIVEN BY EGYPT, WHICH THE ISRAELIS HAVE POCKETED. IF THEY WANT TO "BARTER", THESE THINGS MUST ALSO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT.

10. AT 2300 LAST EVENING, SADAT RECOUNTED, A MESSAGE WAS RECEIVED FROM BEGIN THROUGH THE ISRAELI MILITARY TEAM AT GIANACLIS. THE MESSAGE STATED WHAT BEGIN HAD ALREADY PUBLICLY SAID AFTER THE ISRAELI CABINET MEETING AND HAD EVEN ANNOUNCED TWO DAYS EARLIER. THE MESSAGE INDICATED THAT NOTHING CAN BE DONE WITH RESPECT TO AL ARISH OR MOUNT SINAI EXCEPT ON A RECIPROCAL BASIS. IT ALSO PROPOSED A MEETING OF THE RESPECTIVE MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE ALTERNATING EITHER IN ALEXANDRIA AND HAIFA, CAIRO OR JERUSALEM, OR AT THE SFM SITE. FINALLY, BEGIN HAD SUGGESTED THAT HE AND SADAT MEET AT SOME PLACE THEY MIGHT BOTH DECIDE UPON.

11. SADAT DISDAINFULLY INDICATED THAT GOE KNEW ABOUT

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PAGE 01 CAIRO 17589 03 OF 04 241554Z
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S E C R E T SECTION 03 OF 04 CAIRO 17589
EXDIS DISTRIBUTE AS NODIS
THESE ISRAELI CONDITIONS 24 HOURS EARLIER FROM ISRAELI PRESS ACCOUNTS. HE HAD THEREFORE ORDERED GAMASY TO DECLINE TO RECEIVE THE MESSAGE AND TO RETURN IT THROUGH THE SAME CHANNELS IT HAD COME, INDICATING THAT THESE WERE NOT THE PROPER CHANNELS. IT WAS NOT A MESSAGE FROM WEIZMAN TO GAMASY, BUT FROM BEGIN TO SADAT. THE

ISRAELI MILITARY COMMUNICATIONS TEAM IN GIANACLIS IS NOT INTENDED FOR ANY MESSAGES OTHER THAN THOSE BETWEEN WEIZMAN AND GAMASY. GAMASY HAD SUGGESTED THAT SUCH A MESSAGE MIGHT MORE APPROPRIATELY BE SENT THROUGH THE U.S. EMBASSIES. SADAT SAID THAT IF BEGIN ATTEMPTS TO SEND HIS MESSAGE THROUGH THE U.S. EMBASSIES, HE WILL ALSO DECLINE TO RECEIVE IT. THERE IS NO POINT TO RECEIVING SUCH A MESSAGE WHEN ITS CONTENTS ARE ALREADY KNOWN FOR THE PAST TWO DAYS BECAUSE OF ISRAELI PUBLIC STATEMENTS. IN ANY CASE, GOE CANNOT AGREE TO THE PRINCIPLE THAT BEGIN DEMANDS.

12. THE ISRAELI CABINET'S ACTION, SADAT ASSERTED, HAS CREATED A NEW SITUATION "EXACTLY LIKE THE SITUATION WHICH EXISTED WHEN BEGIN SAID THE WITHDRAWAL PROVISION OF UN RESOLUTION 242 DOES NOT APPLY TO THE WEST BANK AND GAZA." SADAT SAID HE WILL MEET WITH HIS NSC ON WEDNESDAY, JULY 26, AND WILL BRIEF THEM ON WHAT HAS TRANSPIRED. THE OUTCOME OF THE NSC MEETING WILL BE A LETTER TO PRESIDENT CARTER, SETTING FORTH WHAT HE HAD ALREADY TOLD

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 CAIRO 17589 03 OF 04 241554Z

ME ABOUT THE "BARTER BUSINESS" AND CLARIFYING EGYPT'S VIEW ABOUT WHAT TOOK PLACE AT THE LEEDS CONFERENCE AND AT THE LAST ISRAELI CABINET MEETING. THE LETTER WILL INDICATE THAT EGYPT HAS DONE ITS DUTY AND WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO. EGYPT CONTINUES BE WILLING GIVE PEACE, SECURITY AND GOOD NEIGHBORLINESS, BUT NOT LAND. SADAT WILL ALSO MAKE THIS POINT IN A NATIONWIDE ADDRESS HE IS SCHEDULED TO GIVE ON JULY 27 AT ALEXANDRIA UNIVERSITY.

13. SADAT NOTED THAT DAYAN HAD MADE IT VERY CLEAR AT LEEDS THAT ISRAEL INSISTS UPON LAND FOR SECURITY PURPOSES. BEGIN'S DECLARATION AFTER THE LAST CABINET MEETING HAD REAFFIRMED THIS. SADAT PLANS TO PLACE THE WHOLE MATTER IN PRESIDENT CARTER'S HANDS. IN THE MEANTIME, GOE WILL RETURN TO ITS ORIGINAL POSITION. SO LONG AS THERE ARE NO NEW ELEMENTS INTRODUCED BY THE ISRAELIS, THERE IS NO POINT TO ANY MEETINGS AT ANY LEVEL. HE WOULD ASK PRESIDENT CARTER TO NOTIFY MEMBERS OF THE CONGRESS AND SENATE OF THE SITUATION. GOE WILL ALSO ADVISE THE WEST EUROPEAN HEADS OF STATE AND FRIENDLY LEADERS OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITIES IN WESTERN EUROPE OF THE SITUATION.

14. THIS IS A TIME, SADAT CONTENTED, IN WHICH BEGIN SHOULD FACE HIS "REAL RESPONSIBILITIES." HE SHOULD CEASE TRYING TO GAIN TIME THROUGH NEGOTIATIONS. ON THE BASIS OF BEGIN'S "BARTER" PROPOSAL, GOE WILL NOT GIVE UP ONE CENTIMETER OF LAND. GOE, SADAT CONCLUDED, HAS FULL CONFIDENCE IN PRESIDENT CARTER.

15. I SAID THAT WE UNDERSTAND SADAT'S DISAPPOINTMENT AT

THE ISRAELI CABINET DECISION. IT SHOULD COME AS NO
SURPRISE, HOWEVER, AND I THOUGHT ALL OF US OUGHT TO
RECOGNIZE THAT WHAT IS NEEDED IS AN ONGOING NEGOTIATION.
I DID NOT KNOW EXACTLY WHAT KAMEL HAD REPORTED TO THE
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 CAIRO 17589 03 OF 04 241554Z

PRESIDENT ON THE LEEDS TALKS, BUT WE HAD BEEN IMPRESSED
WITH THEIR BUSINESSLIKE NATURE. GRANTED, NO BREAKTHROUGH
HAD OCCURRED, BUT NONE WAS EXPECTED. THERE CONTINUE TO
BE SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES, BUT SOME POINTS OF COMMON-
ALITY HAD ALSO BEEN IDENTIFIED. ONGOING NEGOTIATIONS
CAN HELP TO BUILD ON THESE POINTS OF COMMONALITY. I
HOPED, THEREFORE, THAT HE WOULD RECONSIDER HIS DECISION
NOT TO AGREE TO ANOTHER MEETING. WE CONSIDER ANOTHER SUCH
MEETING, PREFERABLY WITH BOTH FOREIGN AND DEFENSE
MINISTERS PRESENT, AS A NECESSARY STEP IN THE PROCESS.

16. SADAT REITERATED THAT AFTER THE ISRAELI CABINET
DECISION, HE SAW NO POINT TO SUCH A MEETING. IT WILL
SIMPLY BECOME THE FORUM IN WHICH THE ISRAELIS SEEK TO
"BARTER". THEY WILL SPEAK OF THE NEED TO COMPROMISE,
TO WHICH NO ONE CAN OBJECT, BUT THEIR BASIS OF COMPRO-
MISE WILL BE STARTING FROM THE POSITIONS THEY NOW HOLD.
THIS IS UNACCEPTABLE TO EGYPT. I URGED THAT SADAT SHOULD
NOT REJECT OUT OF HAND THE PROPOSAL FOR JOINT MEETING OF
FOREIGN AND DEFENSE MINISTERS. THIS WAS NOT A BEGIN
IDEA. RATHER IT IS A USG IDEA, WHICH HAD BEEN MENTIONED
IN THE SECRETARY'S ORAL MESSAGE. IF GOE BELIEVES
IT IS NECESSARY TO HAVE USG AGAIN CONVENE SUCH A
MEETING, THIS IS CERTAINLY AGREEABLE. THE IMPORTANT
THING, HOWEVER, IS THAT ANOTHER MEETING TAKE PLACE.
SADAT MADE NO COMMITMENT, BUT FINALLY AGREED THAT WE
CAN TALK ABOUT IT FURTHER WHEN ATHERTON AND LATER THE
SECRETARY VISIT THE AREA.

17. COMMENT: AFTER TURNDOWN OF HIS ENCLAVE IDEA AND

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PAGE 01 CAIRO 17589 04 OF 04 241556Z
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S E C R E T SECTION 04 OF 04 CAIRO 17589

EXDIS DISTRIBUTE AS NODIS

KAMEL'S REPORT OF DAYAN'S INSISTENCE ON TERRITORY FOR
SECURITY PURPOSES, SADAT ONCE AGAIN HAS HIS BACK UP. HE
DEEPLY DISTRUSTS BEGIN AND WANTS NOTHING TO DO WITH
HIM. HE SEEMS TO BE INCREASINGLY HOPING THAT BEGIN
WILL BEFORE LONG HAVE TO LEAVE OFFICE FOR POLITICAL OR
HEALTH REASONS. I BELIEVE HE WILL EVENTUALLY COME
AROUND TO AGREEING TO ANOTHER MEETING, BUT CANNOT AFFORD
TO APPEAR TO BE KNUCKLING UNDER TO HARDLINE ISRAELI
CABINET DECISION AND BEGIN STATEMENT. HE NEEDS A BIT
OF TIME TO SIMMER DOWN, BUT IS IN ANY CASE COUNTING
ENTIRELY ON US TO FIND SOME WAY OF BUDGING THE ISRAELIS.
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